MDC PROGRAM PROJECT, REPORT, AND PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

MDC Program Project Guidelines

Because completion of the MDC Program depends on successful completion of a project on a "doable" topic, you should be thinking about your project early in the MDC Program. As you encounter questions, problems, proposed solutions and other ideas throughout taking classes, ask yourself, "Is there a project idea here?"

Steps in selecting a project:
- Identify an issue, problem, opportunity, or gap in your agency that needs to be or could be addressed, and the importance of addressing it. It should be something that would have a significant impact on the unit, division, or department. Ideally, choose a project that would save or generate money, improve service delivery, or increase efficiencies for the state and is mission-critical. The project can be an individual or team project and can involve partnerships with other agencies. It should take a minimum of one year to complete, but can continue for a longer period of time. Examples of past MDC projects are available upon request.
- Determine how the problem, gap or issue could be addressed, and if it is in your control to do so.
- Discuss it with your supervisor and agree on the project and your role in it.
- Identify the purpose and goals of your project. What are you trying to achieve and what is the significance of accomplishing it?
- Research and analyze your topic, as needed. Demonstrate the ability to turn ideas into a plan of action and the ability to gain buy-in for the project.
- Begin working towards accomplishing your goal. While working on the project, keep a journal that can be used to write the final paper. In the journal, include actions, obstacles and how you overcame them, accomplishments, and outcomes upon completion.
- Review the project proposal, report, and presentation guidelines before beginning your project to ensure you will capture any critical information while working on the project.

Project Proposal:
1. **Project Title**: Tentative project title
2. **Problem Statement:** Clear description of the issue, situation, or problem you expect to address as a result of your project. Include a description of the organization affected by the project and why you feel the project is attainable. Include in your response:
   a. What are the existing problems or needs? Be specific.
   b. How many people will be affected?
   c. What are the consequences if the needs are not met?
   d. How will your project address these needs?
3. **Project Vision/Mission**: How will this project relate to the "big picture" of the organization, how does this project support the mission of the state or your organization? In an ideal situation, what does the result of the project look like? A combined vision/mission statement for the project is acceptable. Describe the importance or significance of the proposed project.
4. **Goals:** These are broad, general statements that tell what you want to accomplish. What are the desired outcomes of the project? List no more than three goals. For example: To provide aspiring supervisors/managers with the leadership tools needed to successfully compete for promotions.

5. **Objectives**: These are the specific ways you plan to reach your goals. The statements should be "SMART" goals. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Time-framed. Example: We will start a pilot program in each section in our division by December 2014.
6. **Methods**: This is your plan of action that details who will do what and when it will be done. Basically, it allows you to explain how your goals and objectives will be reached. It should be a step-by-step chronological plan that lists tasks and responsibilities along with an expected date of completion. Which stakeholders are impacted by this project and how will you involve them in the process?
7. **Summary and Evaluation:** State the expected measurable outcomes and include the method that you will use to evaluate the success of the project.
8. **Sustainability:** Explain how your project will sustain itself over time. Include if others will be involved in the project and any strategic partnership that you will look to build with various individuals or groups. Will there be resistance to the project? If so, by whom?
9. **Budget**: Are funds needed to carry out your project? Use a simple line items budget to show how it will be spent (supplies, printing, equipment, etc).
10. **Time Line:** Set a one-year time frame that details how you plan on accomplishing your initial project objectives listed above.

Proposal Criteria:
The proposal should not exceed four double-spaced typewritten pages (11 point Times New Roman and 1" margins). Use the section titles provided in the bullet points above for organizing the proposal. Proposals not meeting these guidelines will be returned.

MDC Program Report Guidelines

Report Outline:
Regardless of the project topic, the project should explicitly apply concepts drawn from the MDC Program course work. The outcome should be improved understanding of the professional practice of management competencies in state government. The project may also result in recommendations for action that could change an organization or program.

Each participant's final report will be divided into seven sections as described below:
1. **Executive Summary**: Should be written after all other sections of the report are competed. This section provides the reader with an overview of the sections of the paper.
2. **Introduction**: Describes the issue or problem studied, including its development over time and the relevance to the state and/or your organization. Describe the relevance or significance of the issue, problem, or project and present a concise and clear statement of the question you are addressing, as well as the likely outcomes of not addressing the issue or problem.
3. **Background:** Describe any previous attempts to address this issue by the state or organization, or challenges in addressing this issue or problem.
4. **Competencies:** Describe the leadership skills related to the core competencies needed for the project and how the competencies learned in the certificate program contributed to the outcome of the project.
5. **Methodology**: Describe the specific questions the project is answering and the process used to gather information and data. Carefully describe the specific steps taken to ensure the validity, creditability, and utility of the results. Describe how leadership support was gained for this project and any stakeholder involvement.

6. **Results/Outcome**: Describe the results of the project and the potential impact of the project results on the organization, the public, or the State of Delaware. Identify any shortcomings in the project, unintended outcomes, and future areas that should be considered. Present implications and recommendations derived from the results. Make sure to include both tangible and intangible results.
7. **Conclusion**: Summarize your problem or gap, discuss any opportunities to expand or explore other aspects of this topic, address sustainability of the project if applicable, and acknowledge others that assisted you with the project.
8. **References:** Include applicable references used in the project
9. **Tables and charts:** Include tables and charts in the body of the report.
10. **Appendices:** Include supplemental information relevant to the project.

Report Criteria: Reports will be evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Each participant is required to complete a written report of their project that contains the elements listed above and be between 5-10 pages typed in length, double-spaced, 11-point Times New Roman with 1" margins. Supplemental information beyond the 10 pages can be included in the Appendices. Participants are expected to make an oral presentation of the project to a review panel, including a member of the participant's leadership team.

MDC Program Presentation Guidelines

Presentation: The presentation is a summary of the project and relationship to the certificate program competencies.

At a minimum all project presentations must include the following elements:
1. **Introduction:** Describe your project and what business problem you are solving or improving. Include why it is significant to the organization or the state.
2. **Background:** Provide background information about your project. This is a summary from your report. Include your project goals.
3. **Methods:** Summarize the tools you used, steps taken, any measurements or observations,
4. **Discussion:** Describe your project in detail. Include what you learned through the project and if you would do anything differently.
5. **Competencies:** Summarize the competencies that were required to successfully complete the project and the significance of the competency to the project.
6. **Project Description:** Provide an overview of the project including the background, key stakeholders, significance of the project, methodology used and results/outcome.
7. **Conclusion:** Summarize and conclude your project. Restate and answer your problem or gap, discuss any future work that could be done on this topic, and acknowledge anyone for helping you complete your project.

Presentation Criteria: Presentations will be evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Each presentation shall be no less than 30 minutes and no more than one-hour and must include the elements outlined above under Presentation. Time shall be added to the end of the presentation for questions and answers.